

Nature Recovery: a commitment towards change



Gemma Stride
Freshwater Habitats Trust

New Forest Catchment Area

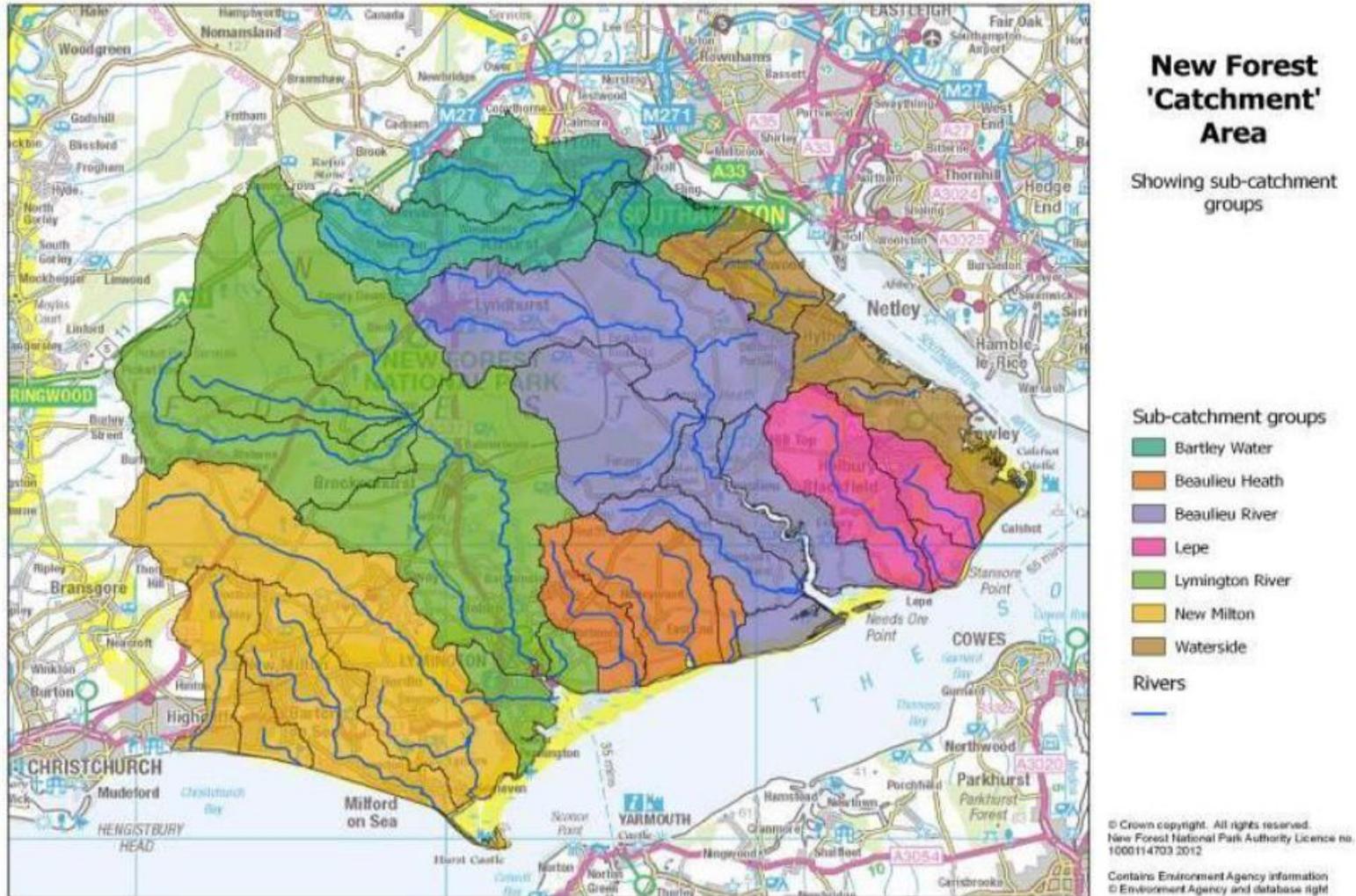


Figure 1 - New Forest catchment boundary and groups

Water quality plays an important role in freshwater and coastal biodiversity

The New Forest supports exceptional freshwater biodiversity...

...because unlike elsewhere the New Forest (at its core) still has clean water habitats free from pollution

...And many species are completely reliant upon traditional grazing and the depressions left by free roaming livestock

These in combination, provide the perfect conditions for thriving biodiversity bursting with rare species.



Water quality plays an important role in freshwater and coastal biodiversity

In recent years, declines in water quality have been detected. These changes are due to:

- Discharge from wastewater treatment works (water company and private sources)
- Intensive agriculture
- Urban area and road run off
- Heavy recreation pressures

Most of England's rivers and lakes are highly polluted - too many nutrients, heavy metals, pathogens, pesticides, and sediment.

Extinction rates for freshwater species are 4 to 6 times higher than terrestrial counterparts (Collen et al 2014)



The Catchment Partnership - identifying and addressing diffuse pollution

Our role is to protect, improve and expand the unique freshwater landscape from source to sea.

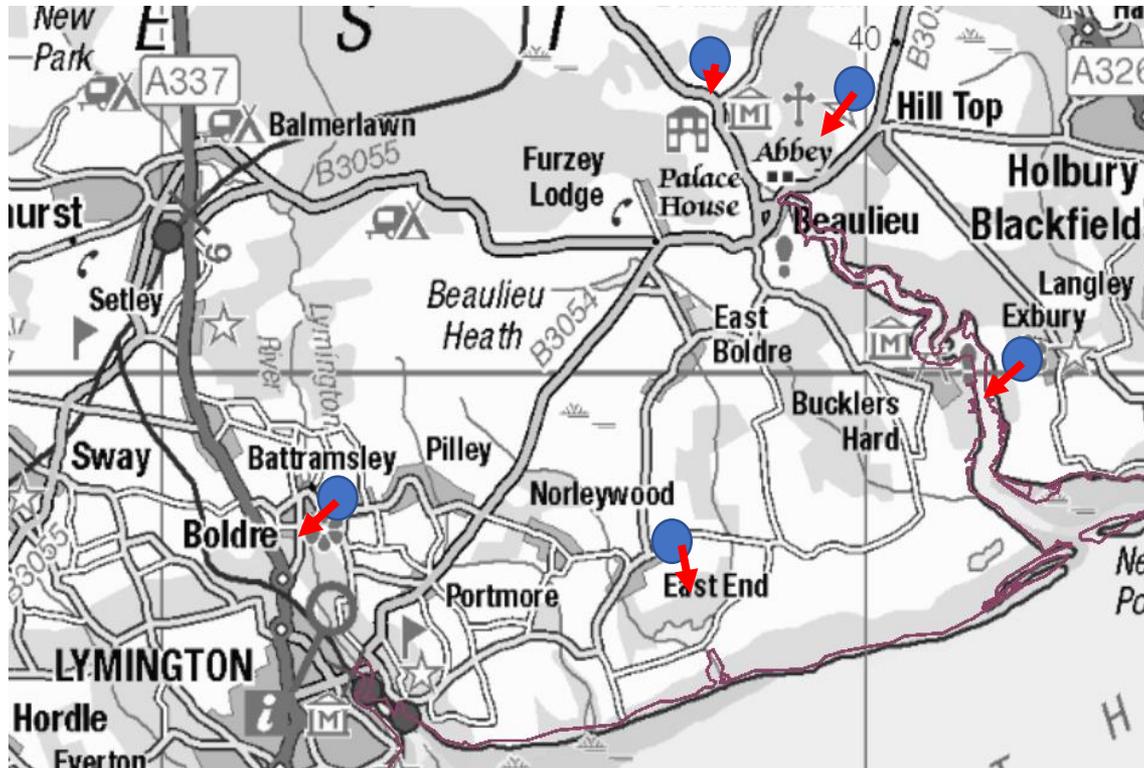
Through the Catchment Partnership our work involves engaging with others to identify risks and ways of reducing pressures from the environment:

- Undertaking regular catchment walkover surveys
- Using statutory WFD and protected sites monitoring data
- Engaging with landowners, businesses and communities to identify opportunities to minimise impacts on the water environment.



New Forest Nurseries: harvesting more than just fruit

The horticulture and soft fruits industry are an important part of the New Forest's economy; businesses have been eager to engage, to seek water resource advice and to find solutions to upgrade and future proof how they use water.



New Forest Nurseries: harvesting more than just fruit



Works have been carried across 4 sites:

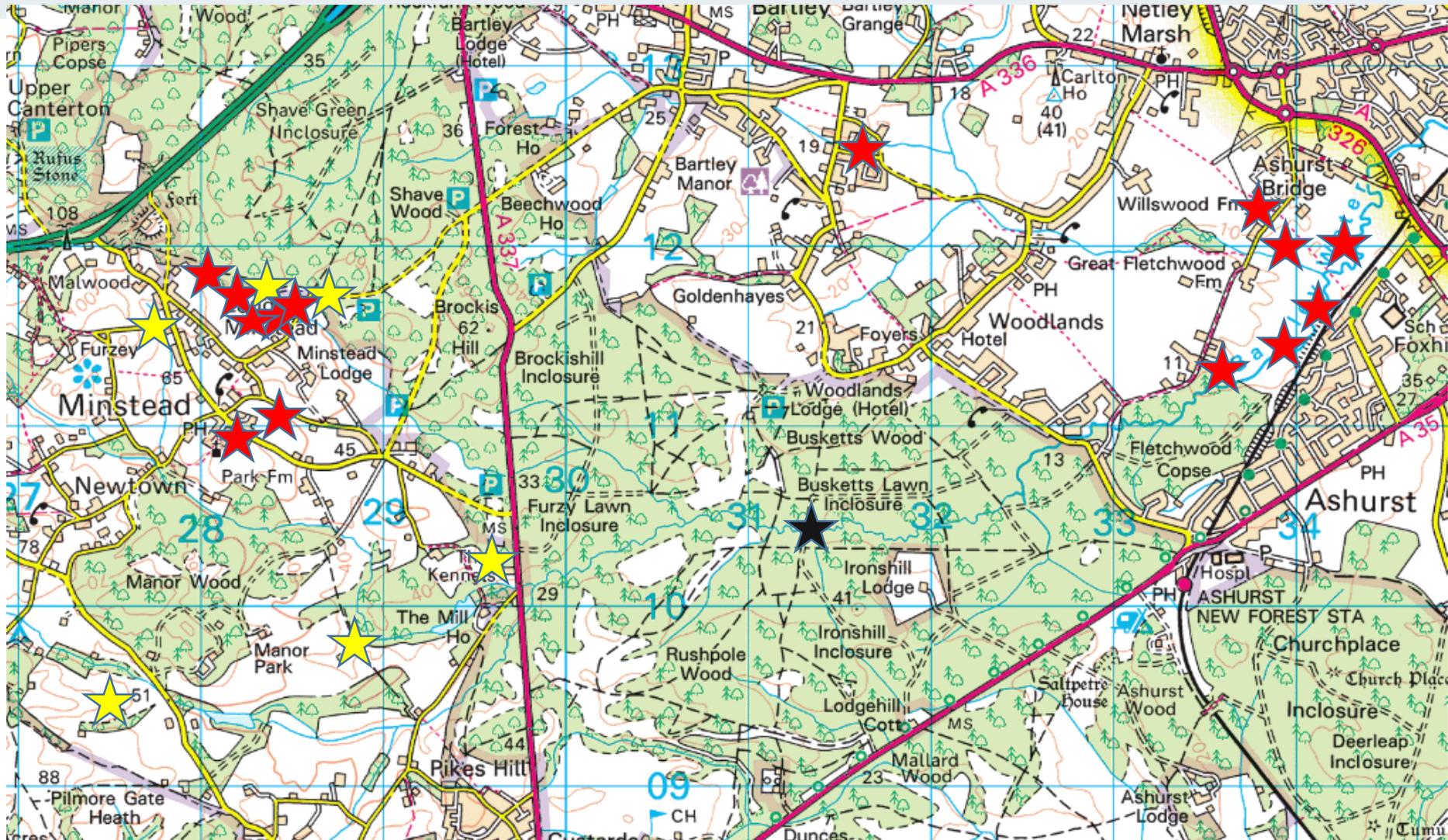
- Funded rainwater harvesting systems connected to irrigation
- Installations of leaky dams
- Complete rainwater recycling feasibility study



The utilisation of rainwater reduces run off, demands on mains supply and channels clean water into useful resource, good for nature, climate and business.

Can these interventions also reduce localised flooding?

Bartley catchment: building best practice land management through community engagement



Red Star – landowners 2020/2021
Yellow Star – Landowners 2021/22

Black Star – WTW discharge

Bartley catchment: building best practice land management through community engagement



Wilder for Water: developing a clean water standard for camping and recreation

Through discussions with landowners, partner organisations and local business coupled with catchment walkover surveys, a pattern has begun to emerge:

- Landowners seeking advice on reducing and reusing water
- Visitors make a beeline for water and do not know why some activities are bad news for wildlife.
- Water quality tests detect nutrient pollution downstream of campsites and ditches around car parks.
- Rangers can see the problems and have requested more information to help target messaging to visitors.

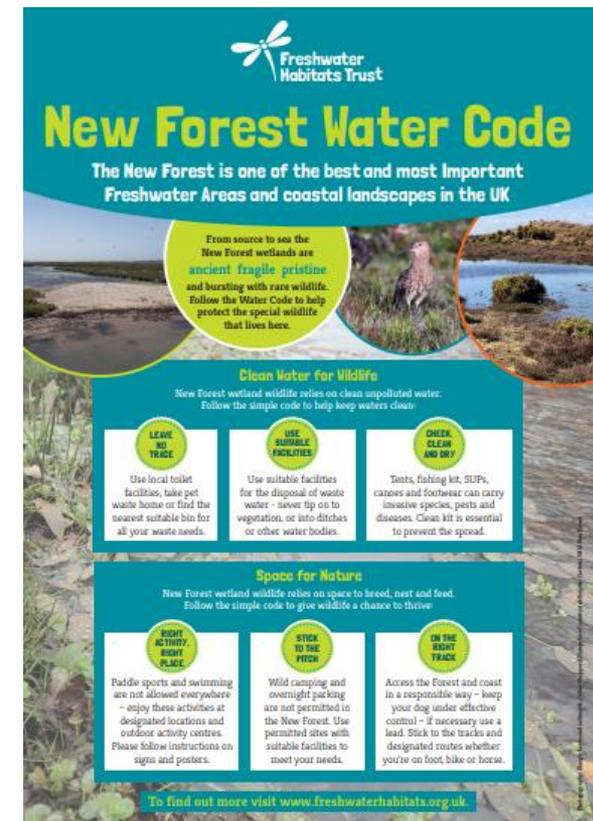


Wilder for Water: developing a clean water standard for camping and recreation

A project to raise awareness of the special qualities of the New Forest waterscape and to champion a best practice clean water standard for camping and recreation

Funding from the GRCF and the EA's WEIF, our targets include:

- Engaging with key visitor audiences.
- Provide resources to help others engage and promote key messages.
- Provide free and impartial advice to landowners and businesses on water resource management.
- Seek funding for solutions which reduce the pressure on the water environment.
- Build a network of freshwater champions.
- Develop a best practice Clean Water Standard for camping and recreation provision.



In conclusion

Communities across the Forest are committed to change, working together to reduce their environmental footprint

Our focus is reducing and removing nutrients and sediments in line with environmental policies and targets for the water environment

However there is uncertainty around biological impact this is having

Its requires much more monitoring to track changes in biology

Reducing pressures on the environment is only part of the solution

Creating clean water habitats is the next step to expanding the freshwater network



The New Forest being a high quality landscape at the core is a major factor in helping any intervention maximise their potential.



Thank you



Green Recovery Challenge Fund



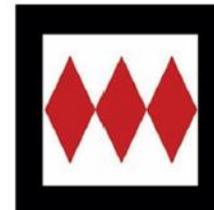
The National Lottery
Heritage Fund



New Forest
Land Advice Service



Hampshire &
Isle of Wight
Wildlife Trust



THE SOLENT
FORUM

